History of colonialism and migration

In a “post colonial” world where the west is viewed as more advanced and therefore more influential, western standards are constantly viewed as better or morally superior to those of the global south, or more specifically Cameroon; where my parents are from, which is a thought that is rooted in colonialism. Europeans saw themselves as morally superior compared to the people of Cameroon and felt as if it was their duty to impose their way of living on to them at the expense of the places they were colonizing. Due to this way of thinking, many traditional customs from many cultures were discarded in favor of European customs and rich parts of our history was lost and sometimes even demonised. The “West is best” ideology, that the West’s standards are standard, has been internalised and reinforced in many communities in Cameroon that have felt the effects of colonialism in the past and globalization today.

As children my parents’ idea of the western world came out of a cartoon: a white picket fence, a house in the suburbs, 2.2 children and a 9 to 5 job, this to them was aspirational. When my parent finally immigrated to Canada, they try their very best to assimilate to the culture which translated to prioritized teach their children, me and my siblings, Canadian culture over our own. They even went as far as to sometimes demonize our culture. I remember sitting around the dinner table and expressing that I wanted a tattoo and my mother expressing her opinion that tattoos were ugly and marking your body wasn’t classy, I began reminding her that the Bamileke

people, our tribe back in Cameroon, practice scaring, tattoos and other forms of body art however she explained to me that tattoos were “a practice of the time its what they used instead of last names”, “it shouldn’t be practiced anymore” and that “it was strange our ancestors found scarring and tattooing to be beautiful”. Although the argument went back and forth as she argued that last name were a more sensible than scarring ones body, it was ours, it was one of many things that made us African, it was one of the things that made Cameroonian so it broke my heart to hear reinforce the same rhetoric Europeans imposed upon us to make us assimilate and makes important parts of our culture wither away as each generation passes by until there is nothing left.